

of Rochester, New York for his continuous advocacy and leadership to prevent and test for childhood blood lead poisoning. It is a pleasure to acknowledge Ralph as an educator, community servant, and leader in the fight to protect children's health.

Ralph Neil Spezio served for 33 years in the Rochester City School District as a teacher, curriculum specialist, vice principal and principal. As principal of Enrico Fermi School No. 17, he excelled at engaging students, faculty, families and the surrounding neighborhood. Ralph addressed the needs of the school both inside and outside its walls in order to restore School No. 17 back to a safe place for learning. He connected with Rochester's leading medical centers to build the Community Health and Family Center on school grounds, established a music program with help from the renowned Eastman School of Music, and promoted an active parent-teacher association.

Despite these improvements, a large portion of Ralph's students continued to struggle with learning and behavioral problems. He felt that his school had more than the average number of students who had trouble with focus, memory, language, and impulsive behavior. It turned out that while Ralph was working to level the playing field for students to have a fair chance at success—even in a school plagued with a 98% poverty rate and located in Rochester's poverty crescent—an unforeseen and silent monster was working against him: lead poisoning.

Lead is a highly toxic metal. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) concludes that in young children, lead poisoning can result in lowered intelligence, reading and learning disabilities, impaired hearing, reduced attention span, hyperactivity, and antisocial behavior. In 1999 Ralph overheard school nurses speaking about students who had been poisoned. Eventually it was discovered that school health records showed 41 percent of the children at School No. 17 had a history of elevated levels of lead in their blood. Worst yet, those were only the results of those children who were tested directly for lead.

Through the Community Health and Family Center he had established, Ralph began testing preschool students for lead. That first year, 100% of the preschoolers tested were positive for lead. Ralph immediately initiated a grassroots effort to educate the community about the dangers of lead and to advocate for blood tests and home inspections.

Mr. Spezio became a founding member of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, a group of Rochester doctors, nurses, lawyers, educators, child advocates, health insurers, property owners and community leaders committed to ending childhood lead poisoning. The work of this coalition has earned the EPA's Environmental Justice Achievement Award. In conjunction with local government and with the support of federal resources through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Coalition reports an 84 percent decline in childhood lead poisoning in Monroe County over the past decade. With this success, Rochester has become a model for other cities combating lead problems.

I am so proud of the excellent, life-changing work that Ralph has done and his commitment to putting children first in Rochester. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking Mr. Ralph Spezio for his leadership, compassion and dedication to

the healthy development of our nation's most precious resources, our children.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BETTY RODRIGUEZ

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Betty Rodriguez, who passed away on November 12, 2012, at the age of 83. Betty will be remembered as one of Fresno's greatest treasures.

Betty was born and raised in Fresno, California, where she graduated from Edison High School and met her husband, Armando Rodriguez. Armando and Betty were high school sweethearts and celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2010. Their marriage was filled with happiness, warmth, and compassion. Together, they shared a deep love for one another and also for their community.

Armando was a Superior Court Judge in Fresno County and Betty became extremely active in the community. She spent her time volunteering for many different organizations, including the League of Women Voters, Girl Scouts, Arte Americas, Ladies Aid for Retarded Citizens, Friends of the Library, and the Fresno-Torreón Sister City Committee.

Betty was a trailblazer for women throughout the Valley. It was an important priority for Betty to instill in women, especially Hispanic women, that they could make a difference in the world. She wanted Hispanic women to feel liberated and proud of themselves and their heritage.

One of Betty's greatest achievements was the founding of the League of Mexican American Women. They created the Fiesta Navideña Fashion Show, an event dedicated to raising scholarship money for local youth. Over \$250,000 has been raised since the fashion show's inception. Betty took great pride in the event because the proceeds were going to a wonderful cause. Betty was known to be able to sell tickets to anyone because she would not take no for an answer. Due to Betty's tireless efforts, the fashion show is still something people look forward to year after year.

This past May, Armando and Betty were recognized at the 12th annual Latino Legends of the 20th Century dinner for their service to the community. Their selflessness and passion for the Central Valley made them very deserving of the award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Betty Rodriguez, a true champion for the people of Central California. Her leadership in the community made her a role model and asset to our community. Betty's generous and kind heart will be sorely missed.

RECOGNIZING MARINE CORPS GENERAL JOHN KELLY

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, it's with deep respect and profound admiration that I rise

today to honor Marine Corps General John Kelly, who just recently became the Corps' fifth active four-star general and took the helm of U.S. Southern Command.

General Kelly has a long and distinguished military career, leading Marines through peacetime and war. His record of accomplishment has earned the respect of not just Marines, but the entire military and civilian leadership structure, and members in both bodies of Congress.

General Kelly is not just someone who I consider a good friend. Having served as a Marine, I also consider him to be a high-caliber officer who embodies all the qualities that make the Marines the most effective fighting force in the world. Without a doubt, he's a role model and mentor to younger Marines. He's a trusted voice for U.S. national security and his service to the nation, spanning more than four decades, has been an asset for the Marine Corps and the entire country.

Those who have had the distinct opportunity to learn from General Kelly and observe him in action are even better Marines today. He's been an inspirational figure to many—myself included—and now as head of U.S. Southern Command, he will surely make his mark as a superior and effective officer who is capable of leading at the highest levels.

Among Marines, the rank of four-star general is attainable only to a select few. They are considered the best and brightest military minds. They are tactically coherent. They are masters of strategic planning and they represent both the intimidating strength and goodwill that is associated with the Marine Corps and the rest of America's military.

General Kelly is the right person to lead U.S. Southern Command at the right time. There is no shortage of challenges throughout the Caribbean, Central America and South America. America faces threats from drug trafficking, corruption and cyber attacks. With General Kelly at the forefront, America will be safer and more secure, and we'll surely be in a position to make progress toward improving conditions in countries that are so close to our doorstep.

And I know I speak for the rest of my colleagues in expressing my gratitude for General Kelly's service. He's an exceptional leader who deserves our unending respect and appreciation for a military career that first began in 1970 when he enlisted in the Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing General Kelly much success as the Marine Corps' newest four-star general and the head of U.S. Southern Command. Semper Fi.

BETH DUPREE

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Beth DuPree, a breast surgeon, oncologist and the medical director for Holy Redeemer's Breast Health Care Program in my home of Pennsylvania.

Earlier this month, Dr. DuPree was honored with the inaugural Be Well Philly Hero Challenge. This award, presented by Philadelphia Magazine, honors local champions of health and wellness.